

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for distributing data to a plurality of agents in an distributed services network, comprising:

receiving a first request from a requesting instance of a plurality of instances of an agent application configured to accept a service selected from the group consisting of a registration service, a profile data management service, a login service, an agent connection status service, a plug-in management service, a subscriber profile management service, a service point map service, a profile management service, an administrative service, a data publishing service, an announcement service, and an agent configuration service;

in response to receiving the first request, transmitting an index file to the requesting instance, wherein the index file is configurable to:

identify a service supported by the requesting instance;

provide to the requesting instance a filter criterion configured to enable the requesting instance to recognize that the index file is applicable thereto; and

provide a location of first data accessible to the requesting instance; comprises a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances, the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested within each configuration criterion, wherein:

the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application and includes at least one of the configuration criteria;

each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a location of

~~first data and at least one filter criterion;~~

~~each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties; and~~

~~at least one filter criterion identifies the requesting instance;~~

receiving a second request from the requesting instance that is generated by the requesting instance in response to a filter engine associated with the requesting instance determining that the requesting instance is ~~included in the set of instances~~ identified by the criterion; and

in response to receiving the second request, transmitting the first data to the requesting instance.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the index file is transmitted to the requesting instance when second data associated with the criterion and the location is updated.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the index file is transmitted to the requesting instance after second data associated with the criterion and the location is updated and after a predetermined amount of time has passed since the second data was updated.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:
receiving a message indicating whether the first data was received.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 further comprising:
retransmitting the first data upon request by the requesting instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in response to transmitting the first data.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein
the first data comprise configuration data for each of the set of instances of the application.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein
the first data comprise an announcement to be sent to each of the set of instances of the
application.

Claims 8-10: (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

first means for transmitting an index file, ~~the index file comprising that comprises:~~

a service criterion selected from a service group consisting of a registration service, a
profile data management service, a login service, an agent connection status service, a plug-
in management service, a subscriber profile management service, a service point map
service, a profile management service, an administrative service, a data publishing service, an
announcement service, and an agent configuration service; and

a location of first data;

~~a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances of an application,
the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration
criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested
within each configuration criterion, wherein~~

~~the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application and includes at
least one of the configuration criteria;~~

~~each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a
location of first data and at least one filter criterion;~~

~~each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties; and~~

~~at least one filter criterion identifies a requesting instance;~~

wherein the first means transmits the index file in response to receiving a first request from ~~[[the]]~~ a requesting instance of ~~[[the]]~~ a plurality of instances of an agent application configured to accept a service selected from the service group; and
second means for transmitting the first data to the requesting instance in response to receiving a second request from the requesting instance for the first data.

12. (Original) The system of claim 11 further comprising:

receiving means for receiving a message indicating whether the first data was received.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 12 further comprising:

third means for retransmitting the first data again upon request by the requesting instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

Claims 14–18: (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising:

first instructions to transmit an index file in response to receiving a first request from a requesting instance of a plurality of instances of an agent application, the index file being configurable to:

identify a service supported by the requesting instance, the service being selected from the group consisting of a registration service, a profile data management service, a login service, an agent connection status service, a plug-in management service, a subscriber profile management service, a service point map service, a profile management service, an

administrative service, a data publishing service, an announcement service, and an agent configuration service;

provide to the requesting instance a filter criterion configured to enable the requesting instance to recognize that the index file is applicable thereto; and
provide a location of first data accessible to the requesting instance, and

~~wherein the index file comprises a hierarchal file structure configured to identify a set of instances, the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria nested within each configuration criterion, wherein:~~

~~the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application and includes at least one of the configuration criteria;~~

~~each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a location of first data and at least one filter criterion;~~

~~each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties;~~

~~at least one filter criterion identifies the requesting instance; and~~

second instructions to transmit the first data to the requesting instance in response to receiving a second request from the requesting instance for the first data.

20. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising:
receiving instructions to receive a message indicating whether the first data was received.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising:

third instructions to retransmit the first data upon request by the requesting instance when the message indicates that an error occurred in receiving the first data.

Claims 22–26: (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions executable by a first computer system,

wherein a method of distributing data to a plurality of agents in a distributed services network is performed by the first computer system in response to executing the instructions, the method comprising the first computer system transmitting ~~[[a]]~~ an index file to each of a plurality of second computer systems,

wherein the index file is configurable to:

identify a service supported by the requesting instance, the service being selected from the group consisting of a registration service, a profile data management service, a login service, an agent connection status service, a plug-in management service, a subscriber profile management service, a service point map service, a profile management service, an administrative service, a data publishing service, an announcement service, and an agent configuration service ~~comprises a hierarchical file structure configured to identify a set of instances of an application, the file structure including at least one instance name criterion, at least one configuration criterion nested within the instance name criterion, and a plurality of filter criteria~~

~~nested within each configuration criterion,~~

provide to the requesting instance criteria configured to enable the requesting instance to recognize that the index file is applicable thereto; and
provide a location of a data file accessible to the requesting instance,

~~wherein:~~

~~the name criterion identifies a specific agent or application running on at least one of the plurality of second computer systems and includes at least one of the configuration criteria;~~

~~each configuration criterion identifies a class of instances, and includes a location of a data file and a plurality of filter criteria;~~

~~each filter criterion includes a plurality of instance properties; and~~

~~at least one filter criterion identifies at least one of the plurality of second computer systems, and~~

wherein the index file is processable by an agent application running on ~~[[by]]~~ each of the plurality of second computer systems to determine whether that second computer system should receive the data file stored at the location identified by the index file.

28. (Original) The computer readable medium of claim 27 wherein the plurality of second computer systems is a subset of computer systems coupled to the first computer system.

29. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 27 further comprising the first computer system transmitting the data file to one of the plurality of second computer systems in response to the first computer system receiving a request from the one of the plurality of second computer systems, wherein the first computer system receives the request after transmitting the index file to the one of the plurality of second computer systems.

Claims 30-31: (Cancelled)

32. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the nested representation~~ index file is implemented as XML instructions.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is at least a portion of a telephone number.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is a state.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is a city.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is a building location.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is a department.

38. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 11, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the index file includes a filter criterion that is at least a portion of a telephone number.

39. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 11, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the index file includes a filter criterion that is a state.

40. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 11, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the index file includes a filter criterion that is a city.

41. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is at least a portion of a telephone number.

42. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is a state.

43. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium of Claim 19, wherein ~~an instance property~~ the criterion is a city.

44. (New) A method for distributing data to a plurality of instances of an agent application over a distributed services network, comprising:

receiving a first request from a first requesting instance of a plurality of instances of the agent application;

receiving a second request from a second requesting instance of said plurality;

transmitting, in response to receiving the first request, an index file to the first requesting instance, and transmitting, in response to receiving the second request, the index file to the second

requesting instance, wherein the index file includes filtering criteria that identify the first requesting instance but not the second requesting instance;

receiving a third request from the first requesting instance that the first requesting instance generates in response to a filter engine associated therewith determining that the filtering criteria identify the first requesting instance; and

in response to receiving the third request, transmitting to the first requesting instance first data identified in the index file.

45. (New) The method as recited in Claim 44, wherein the transmitting of the first data causes the first requesting instance to be configured differently than the second requesting instance.

46. (New). The method as recited in Claim 44, wherein said filtering criteria include a service criterion selected from the group consisting of a registration service, a profile data management service, a login service, an agent connection status service, a plug-in management service, a subscriber profile management service, a message posting service, a service point map service, a profile management service, an administrative service, a data publishing service, and an agent configuration service.